



Date: September 10, 2003
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Stage II Fire Restrictions Still in Effect

Despite the shorter days and cooler fall weather, extreme fire danger persists due to the lack of precipitation. As the archery and bird hunting seasons get underway, hunters and recreationists are reminded that Stage II Fire Restrictions remain in effect on private, state and federal lands in Big Horn, Carbon, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweetgrass, Treasure and Yellowstone counties.

In addition, the Forest Service has closed the Stillwater drainage because of the Cathedral Fire, and the Bureau of Land Management has closed the areas generally known as the South Hills near Billings, the Shepherd Ah-Nei area north of Shepherd, and the Acton area northeast of Billings to motorized vehicles. For further information, please contact your local fire agency.

Stage II restrictions prohibit any open burning, including campfires. Smoking is allowed only within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials. In addition, motorized vehicles must stay on designated roads and trails, and operating a chainsaw or other equipment powered by an internal combustion engine, blasting or welding is prohibited between 1 p.m. and 1 a.m.

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Exemptions are allowed for persons using a fire solely fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG; for a federal, state, or local officer, or member of an organized law enforcement, rescue, or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty; or for persons with a permit or written authorization allowing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.

The Billings Area Restrictions Group coordinates fire restrictions on federal, state and private land in Yellowstone County and surrounding counties. It includes representatives from the Forest Service; Bureau of Land Management; Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the counties of Big Horn, Carbon, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure, and Yellowstone.

For more information, please contact the Custer National Forest at 406-657-6200; Bureau of Land Management at 406-896-5013; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation at 406-247-4400; Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 406-247-2940; Carbon County at 406-446-1595; Stillwater County at 406-321-0204; or your local fire department or sheriff's office.

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